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FOUR RELIGIOUS ESSAYS

JOHN C. SKOTTOWE

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FOUR RELIGIOUS ESSAYS

BY

JOHN C. SKOTTOWE

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FOUR RELIGIOUS ESSAYS

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I

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PSYCHIC CONSTITUTION OF MAN AND HIS LATENT POSSIBILITIES

TO write an essay on Psychics or Psychic Phenomena is indeed a task so vast and of so great importance that one might well hesitate to attempt so sublime a theme, but on the other hand, when one has for years tried to make a fair and unprejudiced study of a particular subject and has hunted up and studied many volumes and compared many theories concerning the Psychic constitution of man and its faculties, besides at one time making certain personal investigations in what is known as Psychic Phenomena, it may prove of some benefit to those who have had neither the time nor the inclination to delve into so fascinating a subject to hear some of the theories so studied and some of the conclusions arrived at.

The tendency of the greatest masters of the

Occult at the present day with which we are in full sympathy is to try to bridge over the chasm that exists between the extremely contemplative and mystic idealism of the Orient which runs undoubtedly to an extreme on one side, with the extreme physical practicalism of the Occident which runs to an extreme on the other side. We use the word "physical" and not "material" for reasons which will appear later on. Each, we believe, has an important lesson to impart to the other, and the happy balance which in due season will be finally struck will prove of the greatest benefit to mankind, as both extremes up to a certain point are also necessary for their final completion, preparatory to their final blending for the fuller completion of humanity.

No one can read the ancient religions of Egypt, Chaldea, India, and also that of the Druids, without becoming convinced that they had made a marvellous study of the complex constitution of Human Nature. Moreover we find that the great religious masters, including those of primitive Christianity, and the Master himself, always withheld certain spiritual and psychic knowledge from the populace for good and valid reasons, well known and understood by the student of occultism, and which were only handed down orally to the

Initiate who to the best of their knowledge and belief after most severe trials and tests were then deemed duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified to receive them. We also find after a careful study that there have been two dominant factors in religion, the highest and noblest from time immemorial recognizing and upholding the inalienable rights and liberties of the Individual, holding that the Individual, to be of the greatest use to society of which he is an integral part, must develop that individuality to the highest point; the other holding that the organization is of supreme importance and teaching that loyalty to the Institution even at the risk of forfeiting one's individual rights and opinions is necessary and that man must sacrifice himself to the organization so becoming of the greatest use to society within the organization and thus practically becoming a slave to the institution and its heads, for which sacrifice of individuality certain rewards are held out to them both in this life and especially in the life hereafter. So far as true psychic development is concerned, the latter method is decidedly destructive to individual unfoldment and spiritual and psychic growth, whereas the former is constructive, as it follows the laws of nature on all planes, and not any man's particular theories.

Its distinguishing between theories and natural laws may be proved by personal demonstration by those who elect to test them.

Some sort of survival of the Physical Death has been held in varying degree in all religions, some, however, having a much more advanced and clear idea on this subject than others. It is also curious to note that many from time immemorial have held that it is possible under certain conditions for the living to hold communion with the dead. We find that the greatest masters of the Occult teach that this is possible in two ways, one of which they designate as the Constructive Principle of Nature in Individual Life, which belongs to the highest kind of Individual Liberty and which is brought about by Individual Development through hastening on and aiding evolutionary methods or perhaps better expressed by hastening on evolutionary conditions, in which case the Individual is perfectly conscious of every step he takes; this method might also be termed the objective method because in all he undergoes he is in a perfectly self-conscious condition. The other method they call the Destructive Principle of Nature in Individual Life, which is the subjective method and is also the method employed in mediumship, which is heartily condemned and

pointed out as dangerous to the soul of man as it is practically destructive to the rational intelligence and will of man, and is liable to lead to lunacy and obsession. The facts and phenomena of mediumship are not denied, but the methods of their usual production are severely censured, it being pointed out that mediumship like hypnotism is a psychic process and both are liable to deprive the individual under their influence of his Individual Will and Rational Intelligence, and hence of his self-control, thus depriving him of those faculties of the soul which endow him with the gift of Humanity and which raise him above the brute creation, and in that condition he more than likely becomes the mere automaton of his hypnotizer, or if in the case of mediumship, which is practically hypnotism by a disincarnate being, of his control.

They teach us that the constructive development, if followed and obeyed, finally produces a Master. That on the other hand, if the subjective method is insisted upon, it, being as a rule destructive, likely leads to danger and disaster to the soul.

That some of the wise men or Magi of old understood the complex nature of man more fully than it is generally understood to-day, we do not

hesitate in admitting, but we also believe that the teaching of these ancient masters is not as some believe entirely lost, but that it has been handed down to the present day to a few by whom it is jealously and carefully guarded for most important and valid reasons, and that at the proper time the knowledge they possess will be given gradually to the world, after perhaps undergoing certain modifications. In fact we have reasons for believing that there probably is a secret school in direct line of descent who have been and still are accumulating vast stores of knowledge along these specific lines and which, as just now said, when the right time comes will be more generally imparted to the world.

In a book entitled "Future Life," by Louis Elbe, we find stated that the Human Being has been considered as made up of seven elements, of which that of Theosophy, the Hindu, and the Egyptian are given as follows:

	Theosophical	Hindu	Egyptian
1.	Physical Body	Rapa	Xa
2.	Vitality	Jiva	Hati
3.	Astral Body	Luiga chavira	Tet
4.	Animal Soul	KamaRapa	Xaib
5.	Human Soul	Manas	Sahu
6.	Spiritual Soul	Buddhi	Ra
7.	Divine Spirit	Atma	Ka

Another division in English terms has also been given as follows:

1. Physical Body
2. Astral Body
3. Prana or Vital Force
4. Instinctive Mind
5. Intellect.
6. Spiritual Mind
7. Spirit

In the Old Testament there are three distinct Hebrew words which are roughly translated soul or spirit: *nichema, rouah, nephesh.* In the creation of man in Genesis these terms are used and Hebrew scholars wishing to keep a distinction in view have given this rendering: "The Lord God joined to his material organs (that is, of man) the intelligent soul (the ego) *nichema,* bearing the breath of life; *rouah* (which follows it in all lives); and the bond of this union of the soul with the gross body was a breath of life, *nephesh.*

There is another division of these elements or bodies made by the School of Natural Science which is as follows:

Physical Body	Physical Magnetism or Physical Magnetic Body
Spiritual Magnetism or Spiritual Body	Spiritual Magnetic Body Soul or Ego
With the following Life Elements:	
Mineral Kingdom	One Life Element, Electro-Magnetic
Vegetable Kingdom	Two Life Elements, Electro-Magnetic and Vito-Chemical, latter predominating.
Animal Kingdom	Three Life Elements, Electro-Magnetic, Vito-Chemical and the Spiritual Life Element, latter predominating.

Mankind — Four Life Elements, Electric Magnetic, Vito-Chemical, Spiritual Life Element, Soul Life Element, latter predominating.

That the △ has been one of the symbols of man in various schools of occult science for ages past is interesting. Here we find the base representing the Physical Body with all its faculties, attributes and properties; the left hand side of the triangle representing the Spiritual Body with all its faculties, attributes and properties; and the right hand side, the Intelligent Rational Being, Ego or Soul. In a subject of this kind one must give credit to all sources for his information. What he can do for himself is to draw conclusions and test what is claimed. Among other things we learn to realize that there is spiritual matter or substance as well as physical matter or substance, and that between the physical universe and the spiritual universe there is another large field of matter not so ethereal as the spiritual and more closely allied to the physical, known as the Magnetic Field, and that there is spiritual magnetism which is attracted to the physical body, and that Physical and Spiritual Magnetism are attracted to each other. During our earthly life the soul, which is back of all these, manifests itself on the physical plane through the physical organ-

ism; that the Spiritual Body resides within the Physical, though it does not actually occupy the same space, which one writer expresses somewhat in the following manner, "You can fill a glass with marbles and after it is so filled you can add to it a lot of small shot; still it is not full, for you can then fill up the still vacant space with fine sand and after this you can pour in water and still other liquids of less density and can then charge it with electricity." Matter in the magnetic field is on a much higher vibratory rate than that in the physical world, and matter in the spiritual world on still a higher vibratory plane. That the latent spiritual senses can be developed by proper training, the basis of which is a strict morality, morality being defined as "man's established Harmonic Relations to the Constructive Principle of his own being," that there is a technical work of Instruction, is also admitted, but it is never given until sought for by a student and then not until he shall have proved himself worthy and well qualified and duly and truly prepared to receive the same, and no monetary remuneration is ever received for such instruction, that it is given orally and under the greatest secrecy; it is also clearly stated that but few at the present day have the time or the means to devote to it, and that any man who lives a pure and moral and unselfish life, at death will

thus have prepared his soul for residence in the higher spiritual planes of existence whether he at present is aware of the fact or not, as obedience to God's or Nature's laws always reaps their due reward.

At death we learn that man may enter at once into the Spiritual World in his Spiritual Body and with his Spiritual Magnetism, that those not prepared and still clinging to earth retain their physical magnetism or physical magnetic body and reside in the magnetic field until such time as they learn to unfold and leave it behind when it gradually vanishes back to the elements to which it belongs as does the physical to its elements, but that it can to some extent, after the owner has parted with it, be preserved by spirits who understand the way (it sometimes being known as the astral shell) and that at spiritual séances these astral shells are often made use of by evil spirits as a mask to impersonate their original owners, again showing one more way by which the unwary may be deceived in mediumistic séances.

No student of the Occult can get very far in his studies without realizing the reason why what is called the school of White Magic constantly warns against Black Magic, which is dangerous and destructive to the individual soul. That the Magnetic Field of the Mystic and Occult Societies has

given rise to the Christian Intermediate State and the Roman Catholic Purgatory, there is in my mind no further doubt.

Again the reason that our Lord undoubtedly laid such tremendous stress upon right conduct to those who followed him is also made more clear by my researches, as a good life here results in a good life hereafter even though we may be in complete ignorance concerning the conditions in another life. That the dangers and temptations arising from the student who unfolds his marvellous latent psychic powers and forces by means of the constructive method are also very great is also perfectly clear, for if used for selfish purposes they become destructive to the soul, and we all know what it means to eradicate every particle of selfishness which is so innate in us all. But that it is necessary for some to know these things and that there are a few great and good enough to use them aright is also well, for it is necessary for some to know these things by personal experience and self-development, for some must be in advance of others to lead the world gradually on to higher and nobler conceptions and more profound truths. We also most firmly believe that the only legitimate way to unfold these latent divine psychic faculties is by the independent constructive method by strict obedience to the laws

of God that make for Individual unfoldment, without wilfully impairing or sacrificing our Personal Responsibility which distinguishes man from the brute creation. We believe the only true way is the narrow way of attainment mentioned by our Lord and Master. That the subjective method by which we temporarily forfeit our Personal Responsibility and allow ourselves to become mere automatons, or machines, yea, the playthings, for other beings either incarnate or disincarnate to do what they please with us, we believe to be extremely dangerous against nature and nature's God, who has endowed us with that precious gift which raises us above the brute creation and makes us morally responsible beings; and to trifle with this gift and to forfeit it even for a time is to trifle with our souls, which will have a most destructive effect upon our present and future well being that we may find it extremely hard to rectify and if insisted on, who can tell, may be extremely fatal to the Individual soul itself; therefore my advice, except for strictly scientific investigation and purposes, is for the ordinary individual to be very careful as to how he or she dabbles in Purely Subjective Methods.

My study and researches naturally at one time led me to a very great interest in mediumistic Psychic Phenomena and various other subjective

processes of coming into touch with the physically unseen and having found enough evidence at private séances to satisfy myself of the genuineness of some of the instances recorded, we were for some time not unfavorably disposed towards honest mediumship; but one thing always was unsatisfactory, which was this, that the one who brought about the results when genuine was himself or herself very often practically unconscious and irresponsible during the sitting. We felt for years that there surely must be an independent method whereby one could consciously unfold those higher faculties which are lying dormant or latent within us and which one school designates as the subjective mind or subconscious self, and at the same time retain the memory of all thus seen unimpaired, and of one's own free will go and return into the higher planes of existence as we saw fit. We have been extremely glad that some of the best Teachers of True Psychism and Occultism have held for centuries the possibilities of this very thing, and there are some who have individually demonstrated its possibility. The writer intuitively knows it as a fact, but he is still but an interested student and hopes an unbiassed and unprejudiced seeker after Truth.

There is much more we could say, as a study of mankind leads one into a thousand and one ques-

tions not only purely psychical but also sociological, for you cannot separate the indwelling spirit that manifests itself in a thousand different forms and on manifold planes from the form it at any one particular period happens to assume and from the individual relationship it bears to other forms so manifesting themselves. No one has ever seen a soul; all he sees is the form that soul manifests itself in; it may be a physical body, an astral body, or a spiritual body, but so far as we can learn it always manifests itself through some form of material, for there is, as already remarked, spiritual material as well as physical material, only on a higher plane of vibration.

When we have learned by a wonderful mastery over self and perfect self-control to withdraw ourselves absolutely from our physical surroundings and, figuratively speaking, to close ourselves to the world, then we realize that we can use our latent senses so that they can behold other worlds than this. At death our physical instrument which connects us with the physical universe is dissolved or left behind, that is all. We may, if we know how, be able to clothe ourselves temporarily with physical matter again and so appear for some special object, but this is simply a physical phenomenon and not a spiritual one.

We now hope that enough has been said to

awaken some slight interest in this subject, one often neglected and sometimes ignorantly scoffed at, but the writer knows that on more than one occasion he has been able from the results of his researches to give consolation at those hours of sorrow which come sooner or later to us all, which, had it not been for his certainty of that whereon he spoke, he could not have uttered the words he did, words which have helped to heal a sadly stricken heart.

There are people, perhaps, who do not care to know very much about a place they are about to visit or to move to. They like to be surprised, but they may be disappointed. Others like to know all about where they are going so that they can make the best use of their time and pass on if possible to some place of greater interest and more congeniality. We must all pass the Great Divide; a great surprise awaits many, but he who knows what he has to face will not go in darkness and in doubt, but ready to take up his work where he has left it off here, that is, if he is interested in things pertaining to the soul and its relationship to other souls, nor is he, on the other hand, impatient, for he also realizes that his essential ego or soul is as much in God's Universe and Eternity now as it always has been and always will be on some plane of manifestation.

In a paper of this kind it is impossible to give more than a smattering of the ground gone over in one's researches in this most intensely interesting and all-absorbing topic, which includes all branches of the so-called Occult Sciences such as Astrology, Palmistry, Psychometry, Magic including Witchcraft, the various forms of Mental and Psychic Healing, Divination and Prophecy, Spiritism, Demonology, Hypnotism, Mesmerism, etc. All of these, we believe, have a substratum of important truth, which we by no means have heard the last of, but which in the extreme materialistic wave which passed over the western hemisphere in the last century were all too hurriedly banished into the background and dubbed as superstition and follies of a bygone and ignorant age. The materialistic science of last century, not forgetting the great good it accomplished and the many physical blessings and comforts it has undoubtedly imparted to us, lacked the True Scientific Spirit of the Present Day which demands a fair and impartial inquiry into all things and is learning to condemn that haughty dogmatic spirit which claims to know it all. Some of the subjects mentioned have in the past been given a far more careful and untiring research, and conclusions which were reached centuries ago are again beginning to find credence in scientific circles. Mes-

merism and Hypnotism are no longer dispatched with a wave of the hand; they are undisputed facts, forerunners, no doubt, of certain others yet to be re-established, renovated, no doubt, and stripped of their errors but not entirely false.

Again we have found in our researches of Occultism and Psychics that, among other things not mentioned, it teaches us not only to believe but to know that the great universal Intelligence is at all events a God of Divine Law and Order, and that man in fulfilling the laws of his higher being unfolds ever more and more freely his latent divine principles or potentialities. It teaches us that by a wrong use of the higher principles attained through personal development man for a time can sink lower than the brutes and that with intense pain and suffering he must retrace his steps. It destroys all ideas of an unworthy mechanical or substitutionary religion. It gives us inexpressible and marvellous beauty and spiritual understanding of the work and teachings of our Blessed Lord and Master Jesus the Christ, making morality and a true moral character in its highest sense the Basis of True Religion and of true Psychic and Spiritual Development. It teaches the eternity of the soul of individual life and progression, and the unfoldment and attainment of great spiritual and psychic powers which

when rightly used can be of inestimable benefit to mankind. It shows man how by obedience to the natural laws of the Beneficent Creator he can become master of himself and his appetites and passions and also of his conditions, instead of a slave to custom, to every passing idea that takes his fancy, and to his conditions and environment, for it shows how the latent possibilities and powers of the soul may be so developed as to make us superior to the influence of environment and heredity. It teaches how obedience to God's laws on all planes as shown and taught by Jesus the Master of Masters, the Christ, can enable us to overcome disease except by accident to the Physical Body, and how we may become immune to sickness, always providing that we are willing to pay the price of obedience to the laws of our being.

Many, no doubt, who have made no research into the marvellous constitution of man, who receives a divine as well as a physical heredity, may feel inclined to smile at all this as the dream of a visionary idealist, but he who does so lays himself open to the charge of scoffing at the One Perfect Master of Spiritual, Psychic and Occult truth, Jesus, the Divine Man Jesus the Christ, who years ago announced that "whosoever believeth in me shall never die, because to such a one there is no death," only orderly transition to a higher

plane of manifestation, and who also said to his disciples "Greater works than these shall ye do," alluding to his own marvellous works which were wrought through his perfect knowledge of spiritual and psychic forces which are lying latent waiting for our mastery and our knowledge of how to develop and then apply them.

Let me close with the following words of Louis Elbe, to be found towards the close of his interesting book on "Future Life." I quote them as so many things of vast importance hinge upon their truth which personally I accept as well demonstrated.

"The law of indestructibility applies not only to matter and energy, but also to all events of the past, which also become indestructible when once they have been recorded in the vibrations of the ether, and we have every reason to suppose that the law holds good of phenomena purely immaterial in appearance such as thought, seeing that the ideas which we conceive appear also to be inscribed in the unending vibrations of the invincible ether. We recognize, in fine, that nothing whatsoever in the universe can elude the inevitable operation of the incorruptible law which eternally preserves the memory of the past; and we are hence justified in concluding that the living, and especially the conscious, forces must also be

amenable to the same law, for it can scarcely have determined to preserve the memory of our most insignificant acts, and yet be unwilling to preserve the being who is their author." (Future Life, Elbe, pp 370-371.)

II

LOVE THE BASIS OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

WE hear a great deal of talk at the present time about Church unity, but it appears to us that a great many who discuss this subject do so in anything but an unprejudiced light; many might well ask themselves the question as to whether they are fully decided in their own minds that it really is Unity, and not Uniformity, that they truly desire.

When properly sifted down to Fundamental Principles, after laying aside all prejudice and personal preferences, it will be found that a great many of the Dogmas and Doctrines of all the so-called Christian Churches and Bodies are not essential to the pure Christianity of Jesus the Christ, and may or may not be opposed to it, according to the mental impression which they produce upon those who come into direct contact with them.

The Fundamental Principle of the teaching of Jesus is Love to God proved by our love to

Humanity, as common spiritual offspring from Him upon which He bases all the Law and the Prophets. (See Math. xxi. 37-40.) What then is love to God? What definition of God, if any, can be given to suit all requirements? What do we mean by God? The definition that appears to me as coming the nearest to filling all necessary requirements would be this; any man's highest conception of what is good and perfect, which he happens to hold at any particular time, is the highest conception of God which at that time he is capable of holding; therefore he must love his highest conception of Goodness and Perfection with all his heart, soul and mind; this gives him something real and tangible instead of something vague and hazy upon which to set his affections; it is well to remember that he is to love his neighbor as himself, therefore he must first learn to love his higher Divine Self, the Divine Immanence; therefore in loving his neighbor as himself it is most important that he should have a proper conception of himself as a child of the Universal Spirit, of whom all are children; in loving himself and others he is also loving his and their Divine Origin whom we call God, the Universal Spirit, who is above all, through all, and in all.

God is Spirit.

Spirit is Infinite.

All universal Law comes from the Infinite Spirit.

Therefore all Natural Law is capable of Infinite Unfoldment.

Sin is the Transgression of the Law. Universal Laws are Physical, Mental, Moral, Psychical, and Spiritual, each and all of which are natural on their own plane. Ignorance of Law is therefore the principal cause of Sin.

Now undoubtedly the simplest statement of Religion given by all great Spiritual Teachers and especially that of the greatest of all, Jesus the Christ, could be expressed in these words: the unfoldment of the Divine within the undeveloped Human, or the bringing of the Human into one mind, i. e., atonement with the mind of God the Universal Spirit; but the Spirit is Infinite, therefore this unfoldment is eternal and progressive, as is also all Divine Law considered from our not fully developed Human standpoint.

This makes it a self-evident fact that no dogmas or doctrines in their present form can be final. They doubtless have hidden beneath the letter an underlying Divine Principle which is changeless, but the forms and symbols which they assume must undergo constant modification and change according to the development, i. e., the evolution,

of the Human Race. Once grasp this fact and Unity is no longer a difficulty, for then the True Christian recognizes that the thing to be aimed at and desired is the unfoldment of the higher divine nature, that is, Christly principles, lying latent in some, and in all degrees of development in others, being careful not to interfere with the individuality, bearing in mind that each man hath his own gift from God, who as Universal Spirit in a certain sense becomes individualized in each of his creatures, which should be true manifestation of his spirit, or in other words become perfect instruments for the Universal Spirit to work through, and in which to become individualized, as St. Paul says, One God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and *in you all.* All forms of Christianity, and in fact of any Religion, on no account should ever be regarded as an end in themselves, as this is the great danger to which all are subjected, and if they do not observe care it defeats the very object for which they truly exist. They must ever keep before the minds of the masses that they are only a means to an end, to be used as guides, signposts, and spiritual tonics to the soul in its endeavors to come into conscious communion with the Divine Source of its being; then as we recognize that men are on all planes and stages of growth and evolution, we will readily

recognize that one form may help one and another form may help another, and that as a man outgrows one form a higher form is at hand to take its place.

Trying to force one's Religious Knowledge and Belief of a high order upon those whom St. Paul designates as babes in Christ is as sensible as it would be to start a primary school scholar in the high school, which is ridiculous on the face of it.

Religion must be faced and presented in a commonsense and scientific manner if it is ever going to appeal to the masses, who are no longer entirely lacking in intelligence and education as in former days and hence could be dictated to and ordered about without a mind of their own, and whose superstition was often played upon by a not always over-scrupulous priesthood.

We could here especially call your attention to a careful reading of I Corinthians III which was evidently written by the great St. Paul when under a high degree of spiritual exaltation and illumination. Had the early Christian Church grasped the significance of the words of wisdom therein contained, it is true there would have resulted wide divergence of intellectual opinion, but moral worth and character would have been insisted upon by all. But as soon as the early church councils decided that all men must believe intellectually alike in certain dogmas and creeds, placing these as of

more importance than true moral worth and character which is bound to be the outcome of all True and Unselfish Love as lived and demonstrated by the Master, the True Religion of Jesus rapidly degenerated and became the hotbed of theological and philosophical vagaries many of which the masses of the people could not possibly grasp or understand any more than can the majority of the masses to-day.

In the very early church there seems to have been an exoteric teaching given to the masses, and an esoteric or mystical teaching given to those only who by a righteous moral and spiritual life proved themselves fit for its instruction and reception.

Sin, as already stated, is Transgression of the Law. Transgression of the Law is living out of Harmony with God's Laws on all planes, which produces Disharmony, i. e., Disease.

Righteousness, Physical, Moral, and Spiritual, is bringing our life into Harmony with God's Laws on all planes, which is Harmony, i. e., Health.

The Religion of Jesus is the unfoldment of the Divine within the Human or bringing the Human into agreement with the Divine, but all Natural and Universal Laws manifest the mind of God, but God is Spirit, and God is Love, therefore he who loves best and wisest is most spiritual, and

naturally knows most of God who is Infinite Love, and he proves this love by service to his fellow men whom he recognizes as he does himself as the instruments through which the Universal Spirit works and manifests itself, on this and all other planes, and so he recognizes Unity in variety in all those to whom the Master referred when He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." He recognizes love as the fulfilling of the Law.

Dogmas, Doctrines, Creeds, he will leave to the individual to decide which at any time or place is most helpful to him in the unfoldment of his higher nature, and he will realize as did St. Paul when he said, "Therefore let no man glory in man, for *all things are yours,* whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," I Cor. III, 21-23. The Universal Spirit whom we call God is changeless; it is we, as we progress and evolve, that change.

God is as much in His universe as ever. But if any Church or Christian Body fails to strive earnestly to live up to its highest ideals and refuses to grow or permit growth by refusing to recognize the further unfoldment of truth as it is manifested upon earth in many and manifold ways, it will become a stagnant and dead instead of a

living and growing organism and will be weighed in the balances and found wanting as have many other forms of Religion in the past, all of which have served a good purpose in their day and generation, and will give place to a higher form that is a Purer Type of Christianity which, figuratively speaking, will be born from it amidst pain and tribulation, but when it comes to birth will be young, fresh, vigorous, and growing, and fitted to the needs, requirements and mentality, including the Higher Spirituality of the New Age now being born from the pain and pangs and bitter experiences and mistakes of the past. Political Autocracies are fast making way for the Higher Democracies. Religious Autocracies will also in time leave when the time is ripe and they have served their purpose in the evolution of the race, and will give way to a true Religious Democracy. The time will come foretold by the prophet Jeremiah when he proclaimed, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more." Jer. 31-34.

Until then let us have patience and trust in the Infinite Wisdom of our Spiritual Father God, who is drawing all men unto Him, though in many

and devious ways, by the wonderful example of Divine Love and Self-sacrifice as manifested in the Life of Him whom all Christians nominally hail as Lord and Master, and who said, "I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me," thus proving and proclaiming the power of the one True and Universal Religion of Love; which manifests itself around us in thousands of different ways, which never conflict, proving that Love is the fulfilling of the Law and the only Religion which none can take exception to.

III

DOES THE CHURCH CARE MORE FOR VARIOUS THEORIES OF THE TRUTH THAN SHE DOES FOR THE TRUTH ITSELF?

IF we were to ask the ordinary member of the church, or even a minister of the Christian Church, the question which appears as the heading of this essay, they would probably answer without any serious thought or consideration that the particular branch of the Christian Church with which they were connected stands for the Truth itself; but the history of the past and a close and unbiased observation will clearly prove that this has not been the case in the past nor is it by any means always the case at the present day.

Man in the past according to his development and progress has created ideas and theories about God, The Absolute, The Infinite and Eternal Energy and Intelligence, and His relationship to the Universe, in exact proportion to the stage of his development. It is true, however, that there have always been those who have been in advance of the age in which they dwelt and when they have

dared to express opinions and even discoveries which conflicted with the prevailing religious tenets of their day and generation, have been branded as heretics and in many instances have suffered martyrdom for the Truth.

Look at the constant conflict that in the past has existed between theology and science. On this particular subject we recommend "The Warfare Between Science and Theology" by Andrew D. White as being well worth a careful perusal.

Each time that Science has eventually proved the Truth she asserted, sooner or later the Church has had to alter her opinions along those lines, and to fall into line with the Truth, she at first so vigorously opposed. Note, for instance, how she treated the Copernican Theory of Astronomy, and at a much later date the Theory of Evolution; to bear out the truth of our statement compare the Religious and Theological Books of to-day with those of fifty or a hundred years ago and mark well the difference of opinion therein contained; the ultra conservative of to-day would then have been considered as bordering on heresy, and where would the radicals within the Church to-day have been placed? Perhaps for the sake of charity we had better not ask the question.

Is it not time that the Christian Church should come out openly and boldly, yes, and fearlessly, as the champion of truth on all sides, and no matter

from what quarter or source it may be derived, should she not forever cease to try and champion or even to adhere to Theories of the Truth which no matter how useful they may have been in the past, have now been outgrown and will not stand the test of the advanced knowledge of the present day?

Let her acknowledge that no man's conception of God can be higher than the conception of the human medium incarnate or disincarnate through which it passes; let her give Intellectual Liberty to all within the fold, encouraging each one to give to the world that portion of the Truth which his Divine Origin has implanted within them, to be evolved without.

We claim that there is but one source and origin of life—God. Names do not matter; call it if you prefer, The Universal Life or Energy, the Infinite Intelligence, Universal Mind, or the Absolute. After all it is simply man's attempt to give a name to that which he realizes but cannot fully comprehend.

God then being the source and origin of all life, all men must be divine and capable of divine unfoldment.

The New Psychology teaches us that there are three phases or planes of the mind: the Subconscious, the Conscious or Intellectual, and the Superconscious or Spiritual, and that the Conscious

mind or Intellect on this earth plane is the meeting place of the subconscious and the superconscious, and that it is through the superconscious or spiritual that all inspiration flows.

In the New Testament we are told that "the Pure in heart shall see God," and also that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but for some ridiculous reason it has been taught or implied in the past, that the highest kind of Inspiration had ceased, and at the same time that the Deity is unchangeable.

Inspiration is just as possible to-day as at any other period in the history of the world, when the laws governing its operation are put into motion; and as man has progressed farther along in his evolution it ought if anything to be of a higher type and kind.

Jesus, the most perfect manifestation of the Divine, taught his disciples that they should accomplish even greater works than he did when the Spirit of Truth came upon them. It appears to me that the teaching of Jesus is plainly and emphatically that man is divine and capable of endless unfoldment and development, for his command is "Ye shall be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," and we believe this statement of his which so many of those who profess to follow him apparently deny.

The New Psychology teaches us the importance

of holding lofty ideals and the power of auto-suggestion in the building up of a strong character, "For as a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Jesus taught and practised absolute loyalty to the truth as the soul becomes conscious of it, by coming into ever closer union with God, the Universal Intelligence and Truth, its divine source from which it cannot be separated, and in whom all truth centres. The Cross according to a true interpretation of the Gospels cannot be the emblem of a substitutionary sacrifice to appease an angry or offended Deity; angry or offended are impossible adjectives to place before the Universal Beneficence. An angry and offended God to us would simply be nothing but an uncontrolled and finite human devil; these are strong words but the thought of the Supreme Ruler and Sustainer of the Universe being offended at our mistakes and losing his temper at our pitiful ignorance makes a cold shudder run down one's back, especially when we realize the Infinite Love and Wisdom of the Great Being in whom we live and move and have our being. The Cross then becomes the emblem of self-sacrifice and undying loyalty and devotion to Love and Truth, and the truth was crucified by those holding false theories concerning it, for fear that if its theories were destroyed its power over men would be lost. It cared more for its supposed

truth than for the truth itself, but Truth rose triumphant.

As previously stated the New Psychology teaches the importance of keeping constantly before us high and lofty ideals, and the great aid, to be gained in giving expression to these, through the proper use of auto- or self-suggestion, which conclusively proves that the old Hindoo teaching of the repetition of lofty mantrams or short sentences, has a beneficent result in the development of human character; as the ideals thus expressed are impressed upon the subconscious mind which will eventually bring them out upon the plane of objective life.

Does the Church care more for the Truth itself than certain old theories concerning the truth? In asking this question we do not wish to be regarded as in any sense scorning or despising these old theories nor to be understood as asserting that they have done no good in the past, but when old theories have been outgrown and found to be deficient we should not cling to them for the sake of past associations or mere sentiment, but should willingly lay them aside and make room for the fuller revelations that must in due time supplant them. We should keep our minds in a receptive state. By repeated auto-suggestion even of that which is false we clog the mind with false im-

pressions, and make it very difficult for it to lay aside error and accept truth.

The Roman Church either consciously or unconsciously puts into practice the law of suggestion, when it claims if it has complete control of a child up to the seventh year it will seldom, if ordinary care is taken, ever leave the church; it also prohibits the mind from receiving contrary suggestions until its ideas are deeply rooted and impressed and hence extremely difficult to eradicate.

To a certain extent this is true of all religious bodies and is the reason why we find so many in our churches simply because their parents were there before them and they have been brought up in that way and take things more or less for granted that have been impressed upon them during their early life, by the laws of suggestion and auto-suggestion.

Jesus said, "If ye would enter into the kingdom of God ye must become as little children"; that is, we must empty our minds of all preconceived ideas and hold the receptive state of mind, which is willing to examine truth from all sides and compare all opinions, drawing our own conclusions, ever keeping the spiritual faculty of intuition free and clear for fuller revelations of truth from the source of all Truth that Universal Spirit of the Infinite Intelligence God.

We believe that many who have shaken off the

shackles of mental slavery are hindered from attending our services and keep aloof from our Churches, causing the Church to ask that question which has become almost a proverbial saying at the present day, namely, "Why do not people go to church?" which to some extent we think may be answered by saying that a great many people have outgrown our forms of expression and not as yet being able or willing, during a transition period, to reconcile themselves to use the old form of words as symbols or in a poetical sense, they stay away rather than repeat or hear repeated what literally they cannot fully accept, perhaps forgetting that the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life; they then stay away altogether and are often misjudged by those who cannot understand or grasp their mental attitude.

A good woman not long ago told us that she could not bear to go to the Litany Service of the Protestant Episcopal Church, because she did not believe in calling herself a miserable sinner—a somewhat dangerous assertion, so we think when we remember the great power of auto-suggestion; she further added that she did not feel miserable and recognized the Divine Goodness in all His works.

When we seriously come to think of it, it certainly is not a compliment to the Author of our being to belittle the highest forms of life through

which He manifests Himself upon earth, by calling them miserable sinners, worms, etc. An ignorant sinner desirous of further light and development so as to be of greater use to the world in coöperating with the divine plan of progress and evolution would appear to be more to the point with our present knowledge and plane of development.

Christ stands for the Universal Spirit of Truth most perfectly manifested in Jesus, the Logos, Word, Thought or Truth of God. The Church theoretically stands for Jesus, but Jesus is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." These things are manifested in and through him, to be manifested in and through us, but as said the Church stands for Jesus, therefore for the Truth itself, and not for any particular theory of the truth whether of the first, fourth, sixteenth, or any other century. She claims to be Catholic, that is, Universal, that is all-inclusive, therefore if she is to be true to her name she must incorporate truth from all sources and be ready whenever she finds a certain ancient theory to be lacking, to supplant it with one that can be established on a firmer basis, by the further light, knowledge, and methods of the twentieth century; she must ever stand out boldly as a Living Church with a Living Message, she must recognize the divinity of man, and the right of that man who by a holy life and purpose high is ever open

to the voice of intuition and to the higher worlds, coming into touch with the cosmic consciousness from which he can receive knowledge by having developed his latent psychic and spiritual faculties resulting in the unfoldment of his spiritual consciousness.

The Living Church cannot afford, like so many other so-called divine institutions in the past, to cling to pet theories and expressions of what was once regarded as true and beneficent, as by so doing she will cease to live and finally become dead.

Can any serious and thoughtful man or woman help but realize that there is even now a New Heaven and a New Earth to that which was in existence a hundred years ago? Look at the inventions of the last century and those of the last few years and how entirely physical conditions upon the earth have been renewed what with the various uses of steam and electricity, also the advance in chemistry and in medical knowledge, in fact in all departments of science.

If we read the views on heaven and hell as written and proclaimed a hundred years back and compare them with those now written and preached, such as eternal hope, eternal progression and so forth, what a tremendous change we are confronted with.

It appears to us if we are to be true to the

Christ, that is to the manifestation of the truth in Jesus, so we must also be true to the Christ, that is, the divine within ourselves which is constantly being unfolded, individually and collectively in the world; and if the old Historic Church is not to be weighed in the balances and found wanting she must always place truth first and foremost not only theoretically but practically. Her teachings concerning the truth must bear the scrutiny and test of all the so-called sciences; true, she may proclaim things higher than those generally accepted by but nothing contrary to reason. She must be the leader in a True Spiritual Science if she is to hold the reverence and respect of all seriously minded and deeply thinking men and women; she must place Truth and the Goodness that alone can come from the truth, above everything and not insist upon any pet theory or theories concerning the truth, some of which have already been proved to be wrong conclusions and abandoned and others which as yet are still open questions.

She must as the Master said become as a little child, that is lay aside all self-conceived and prejudiced ideas and be open and receptive to the Universal Spirit of Truth which in the æons to come is to guide us by slow but sure methods of evolution, and growth, and progress into all Truth.

In this growth she must learn to be inclusive,

not exclusive, Catholic in its old original sense of Universal, ever ready and willing to embrace and to incorporate The Good, The Beautiful, and True from every source, recognizing that there is but One God and Father. We care not to quibble over names, call it if you prefer, The Universal Intelligence, Universal Energy, Spirit, The Absolute, or The Infinite Source of Being, which is above all, through all, and in you all, ever guiding, directing and leading us, if we allow the promptings of the Spirit by a pure and exalted life to work in and through us for the universal good of humanity.

Once more we ask, does the Church love truth for itself or certain pet theories of the Truth? Our unbiased answer is—

In the past she often loved her theories best. In the present she is not always wholly decided. In the future Truth will win and she will be the champion of the Eternal Truth. A glorious heritage is before her as she allows herself to be guided by the Spirit of Truth which is to lead mankind into all truth.

But in the meantime in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge which we quote as follows:

"Pioneers must expect hard knocks, the mind of a people cannot change only slowly. Until the mind of a people is changed, new truths born before their time must suffer the fate of other un-

timely births; and the prophet who preaches them must expect to be mistaken for a useless fanatic, of whom every age has always had too many, must be content to be literally or metaphorically put to death, as part of the process of the regeneration of the world."

In closing we would state that in our inmost being we realize that the Truth Itself and Truth alone must and shall prevail, and it will be loved for its own sake and for the good which always follows strict obedience to her laws as they are unfolded one by one. The true disciple of Jesus, that most profoundly divine Master and Teacher, knows "that where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Liberty."

IV

THE DIVINITY OF MAN

DIVINE Humanity, Man Divine; wondrous thought, yea, rather important but neglected truth. How little understood, how little comprehended, by how many realized? by how few fully grasped with all that it contains and signifies? For Humanity being Divine, then mankind partakes of the essence and nature of God, and thus every man and woman is a god or goddess in the making. Says the Apostle, "there is One God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all, and in whom we live and move and have our beings"; yet how many believe and realize it. Yea! How many can affirm, I know it; yet it is undoubtedly the teaching of Jesus, the Christ, the great spiritual teacher, master and instructor to whom all nominal Christians profess their allegiance.

A certain writer has said, "That the History of all Dogmatic and Revealed Religion is in Truth but a history of man's endeavors to discover and invent some plan or scheme or method whereby he

may shirk his Personal Responsibility, or shift it to other shoulders than his own, or in some manner escape the natural consequences of its conscious and intentional evasion or violation." That these words are undoubtedly founded on a true statement of the facts cannot be doubted or denied by any earnest seeker after truth, and that it is exactly opposite to the unadulterated truth taught by Jesus, the Christ, is also self-evident to anyone who carefully studies his words and teaching. That the words of the Master have time and again been twisted and turned until they have been made to coincide or take the place of certain prevalent ideas of paganism is something which any careful student of the history of the past cannot help, if he is unbiased, having forced upon his attention.

Man, from the earliest times of which we have any records concerning him, appears to have sooner or later recognized that whenever he did certain things which he intuitively felt that he ought not to commit, he invariably suffered accordingly, and also that whenever he came into conflict or opposition with certain physical phenomena he also suffered; from this he concluded that there was some great power or powers over which he had no control and with which he clothed in his imagination with a personality and like passions with himself, only all-powerful, and whom, like himself, he also imagined could be ap-

peased or bribed by various offerings and gifts; hence the idea of offering pacific sacrifices to appease an angry and arbitrary deity who dwelt outside and above his world: however, as man came to be more highly developed, and as his higher intellectual and spiritual faculties in due time unfolded, higher and worthier ideas of deity sprang up. All ages and climes seem to have had their prophets and seers many years in advance of the age in which they lived. We have for instance such men as Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha and also many of the Hebrew Prophets, whose conceptions of God were far in advance of their day and generation, all of whose teachings have been more or less corrupted from their original purity by the majority of those professing to be their disciples and followers. Finally one greater than all arose whose teachings have been gradually revolutionizing the world, and when they are more clearly and thoroughly grasped and comprehended will do even more than in the past. We, of course, allude to Jesus, the Christ, the greatest spiritual teacher, instructor and master that has dwelt upon this earth, but whose teaching has also been most terribly corrupted and misunderstood; in fact, a great deal that is nothing more nor less than a modified form of paganism goes under the assumed name of Christianity; the great leaders of the pagan world, when they found that they could

no longer stem the tide of Christian truth, which was rapidly losing them their hold upon the populace, sagaciously and shrewdly compromised by professing to incorporate it into their system, and to some extent, by substituting names and terms, they practically saved a number of pagan dogmas by clothing them with Christian names. Among other things, the death of the Master, brought about by his undying loyalty to righteousness and truth, was made into a sacrifice for the propitiation first of an angry Satan and later of an angry and offended God, and offered as a substitute for the shortcomings of man.

The Church assumed the right of dispensing salvation, or not, as it saw fit, upon certain conditions and not infrequently for a monetary consideration, to help fill her coffers. Personal responsibility was admitted as it must be, for it is inherent in humanity, but all kinds of means were adopted by the church, for the sake of power and worldly advantage, to take the place of that personal responsibility; and this has often been so cleverly and artfully done that many have failed to see through the various perversions which so many of the Christian denominations have made of the words and teaching of our Holy Lord and Master, Jesus the Christ.

Let us compare a few of the things which have been taught in the name of the Master with what

he actually taught. So-called Christianity has taught and in some instances still teaches "The Total Depravity of Man." Jesus taught the Divinity of Man: One is your Father which is in Heaven, and all ye are brethren, words addressed to a mixed multitude.

So-called Christianity has taught that God must be appeased because he is angry with man because man sins. Jesus has taught that God is a loving and righteous Father who sends his sunshine and rain on the just and unjust, and longs for the return of the prodigal, because he loves man and hates sin, as sin is the transgression of his wise and beneficent laws, which transgression unavoidably brings suffering which is for man's good, to direct him into the paths of rectitude.

So-called Christianity has taught that Jesus in some way or another has made atonement to God for the sins of mankind, and that if man accepts him in this light which they teach, which varies considerably, according to the denomination or the individual expounding it (there having been some eighteen or more different theories on this particular topic), he will be saved from future punishment. Jesus has taught that man can only be saved from the penalty of sin by giving up sinning, the penalty for the transgression of the law following, as effect follows its cause. Said he, "Go and sin no more"; "Ye shall be perfect even

as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"; the ideal he holds out to man, if they follow him, is the Divine Perfection. Again, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven."

The Christian Church has largely, and especially in the past, taught a God external to and away up above his world, a sort of arbitrary monarch. Jesus has taught a God within his world, especially within the soul of man. Says he, "The Kingdom of God is within you." Again, "Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods?" If he called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scriptures cannot be broken. It is therefore plain enough to the man or woman who has the courage to earnestly pray for the truth and the courage to seek it with unprejudiced and unbiased mind, becoming, as the Master said, in this respect as little children, ever ready to learn from all sources, that a great deal of what has been given forth to the world as the religion of Jesus, the Christ, is quite often the very reverse. No doubt there is a truth underlying it, but the truth has been many times perverted, and most assuredly every honest and self-respecting man has a right to ask himself, and then try and answer the question, What is the keynote of true Christianity, a Christianity upon which all might unite and at the same time give up

nothing of personal value to himself in the way of dogma or doctrine, and which can never be until all men have learnt to love the Truth for its own sake, and to recognize its infinite modes of expression, loving the Truth for Truth's sake far more than their own pet theories and dogmas and doctrines about it; ever distinguishing Truth from Man's manifold attempts at its explanation. We can all believe in a Universal Intelligence which is manifesting itself throughout the universe in a thousand different ways, and hence which is the Universal Father of all, and as the Father of all it brings us into touch with all creation and forces us to recognize all men as brothers and of one divine origin, and hence divine, with marvellous latent capacities, waiting by obedience to the laws of this Universal Intelligence God, to be unfolded and developed.

This realization will leave all intellectual conceptions free to the Individual. Experience and time will prove which are truly in accordance with the laws of God. The moment you undertake to force a certain interpretation of some portion of Truth (for Truth itself is infinite and capable of infinite unfoldment) upon a set of men, making that a standard of membership, you are founding an institution, in so far as it contains truth, divine: in so far as it contains error, human: and who will dare to claim all truth, and make themselves equal

with the Universal Intelligence: hence all denominations in this light can be looked upon as both human and divine in origin, and when this is recognized, a great step towards unity will be gained.

Jesus earnestly endeavored to teach all those whom he addressed to realize the divinity within and to unfold it, and so become conscious of their union with God who is not only above us, but also within us, for the Father incarnates himself in all his works, and no man can possibly understand more of God than he has unfolded within himself, or seen unfolded in some other fellow man, which responds to something higher within himself, which he has not yet unfolded and reached, for we only truly know those things which we have made part of ourselves: in fact, no man really knows any other, he only knows his idea of that other which may or may not be correct. In fact, when we know ourselves so little, how can we presume to know others: in fact, the more fully we know, understand and comprehend ourselves, the better we can comprehend others. Say what you will, no two men have the same opinion of or know their mutual friends in the same way. In brief, we know nothing except that of which the Individual Soul is in some sense conscious.

How, therefore, in all reason can we expect any two men or bodies of men to have any fast or bound rules as to the knowledge of God? All the

laws of Nature on all planes of existence that we know and become self-conscious of, teach us something concerning the ways of the Universal Intelligence; by bringing ourselves into harmony with them, we unfold the Divine within us, and all is well; we are then living according to the Constructive Principle of Nature. When we put ourselves in opposition to these laws, all of which are beneficent when properly used, we are then following the Destructive Principle of Nature, and suffer accordingly: and by Nature we do not only mean Physical Laws, but Spiritual and Psychic Laws.

But Man having a Divine Heredity from God can unfold his nature so as not only to grasp physical laws and their results, but also Spiritual and Psychic Laws and their results.

By strict obedience to Physical, Spiritual and Psychic Law we grow and unfold: those who know more than we do can teach, but we must make that teaching part of ourselves by following the path laid out, so as to make it part of ourselves. But what of the ignorant who have not the advantage of an instructor? No man is so ignorant but that he has some sort of a conscience. Jesus taught men that they must obey this voice of conscience which is intuitive. Wilful disobedience to this higher Divine voice is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven, and which

causes so much sin and misery. Man cannot shirk his personal responsibility and escape the penalty. There is no legitimate way for him to avoid his duty, and to do his best according to the present stage of his development.

One reason why man makes so little effort is undoubtedly from the fact that in the past it has been so universally taught that man is a poor, miserable, depraved, creature, incapable of doing any good of himself, instead of being taught that he is a divine son of God, and that if he claims it, he has within him a latent divine power that will enable him to overcome his shortcomings. He must pray to God with all his strength to unfold the God within, and he must appeal to all that is best and Godlike within to overcome the excesses of his lower and carnal nature, and in doing this he must recognize his latent will power, and once and for all cease to say that it is impossible, for with God within and God without, according to the Master, Jesus, all things are possible to him that believeth. According to much of the teaching of the past, men don't believe and hence don't try—this, with a lurking belief that they can make some sort of substitutionary plea or offset, is half the trouble; let them by self-control and complete mastery over self become conscious of their union with God, as did our Lord and Master, and then the so-called impossible will become possible, and

the lower will give place by obedience to Natural Law to the Higher and Divine that is waiting within to be recognized and made one, by being brought onto the plane of self-consciousness. So long as we disobey the laws of Nature and Nature's God, so long must we suffer until by bitter experience, and for our own final good, we learn to bring our lives into proper Harmonic Relationships.

The whole teaching of Jesus appears to me to impress upon man his latent divinity, and is a direct appeal to him to unfold it, pointing out the blessings that follow the unfoldment, and the suffering that ensues from not bringing our lives into conformity with the higher laws of our being.

He seems to me to teach that having mastered self and selfishness, having gained perfect mastery and self-control over our lower selves, we could then prove not only by our teaching, but by our lives and examples—no matter what our vocation may be—that the Christ life is possible, and that we should urge others to also unfold the Christ within.

The Religion of Jesus thus becomes a life. It is biological far more than theological; it is a life of service to humanity by obedience to the Laws of Nature and Nature's God, a recognition of the Spiritual Fatherhood of God and the Spiritual Brotherhood of Humanity on account of our com-

mon origin from God: it is a life of a gradual divine unfoldment and growth, in accordance with strict obedience to the known laws of the Universal Intelligence, which are being better understood as mankind is more fully and perfectly developed.

In all ages there are those in advance who have reached the stage of conscious union with God and more perfectly understand all that it means and conveys. That man is divine, that man is an Individualized, Finited God in the making, in whom are latent divine powers which he receives from his Universal Father, ever waiting to be unfolded and recognized, and when recognized brings him into true relationship with his spiritual Father, God, and into proper relationship to his brother, man.

This is the message of Jesus Christ, and it is the message of our adorable Lord and Master, which more than any other is needed at the present day.

Religion as taught in the past has been too mechanical, too much a plan of salvation from the consequence of sin; God too much of a big arbitrary monarch on a throne, altogether too earthly, too small for the seriously minded of the present day to love and revere. Jesus, our Lord and Master, has been paganized too much into a substitutionary offering, so as to excuse man for

sinning, instead of being the Way, the Truth and the Life whose Spirit we must incorporate into our very beings, and make part of ourselves.

What God or the Universal Intelligence is in himself we never can tell. The God of Nature is in all his works on all planes of existence. What he is in his works and in ourselves we can learn and know ever more and more fully: what he is above all these things is beyond our limited comprehension. Let us leave it alone.

Let men obey the Master and seek the kingdom of God within, and so unfold their latent divinity; let them bravely meet their Personal Responsibility; let them be ashamed to try and find excuses or scapegoats for their shortcomings in their Religion or anything else.

The Religion of Jesus is a life of usefulness, obedience to the voice of conscience, doing our best each day, increasing our knowledge of God's laws; not simply to believe them, but to know and then to obey and to do them. The mere intellectual belief in anything, alone, will not help us. It is in the doing of the law, or in the bringing of our lives into conformity with it, that man is blest. Said the Master, "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself;" and again, "If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them."

The Religion of Jesus gives fair play to all moral, intellectual conceptions concerning God.

All intellectual conceptions concerning Religion or any of God's laws, in so far as they help a man to be more like Christ (which implies obedience to all the laws of nature with which he is at the time conscious—that means conceptions which are helping him to unfold his divinity), are the best for his present stage of development until he himself, by instruction and research, freely supplants them with a higher intellectual conception, which he sees is going to be of greater assistance to him in his future growth and development.

It is a wise thing to supplant a good thing with a better, but a foolish thing to despise a good thing which has been of value but outgrown.

We should deprive no man of anything that helps him to live nearer to God and to goodness. But all those things which man makes use of as substitutes for his personal responsibility to God and Man, even though he claims them as part of his religion, vainly deceiving himself that they will take the place of living a life in accordance with the spirit of the Master. These we ought to try to destroy as idols of a vain delusion, dangerous to the holder, and to all those whom he might influence in like manner, and as a grave menace to the morals of the Race; for in plain words, they

are vile excuses for the shirking of Duty and a direct refusal to work out their own salvation through the unfoldment of the divine within, by following in the footsteps of him who said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the knigdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Thus we see that the Religion of Jesus is emphatically a life and not a mere intellectual conception of any particular scheme of salvation. Until this fact is fully recognized many thoughtful and truly sincere men and women will hold aloof from connection with any religious body that insists on a scheme of salvation and not a life of divine unfoldment according to the laws of God, leaving their intellects free as to their individual conceptions concerning the nature of God, our Lord, and dogmas in general, some of which are the accretions of a later day than that of when our Lord ministered upon earth, and some of which are pagan in origin, and which may have served their purpose in a day and generation when ideals morally and spiritually were at a lower ebb but which are now gradually being outgrown.

The divinity of man and the best methods for its unfoldment by applying the principles of the Master according to the various temperaments of the individual are the most important questions

with which the church must grapple; if not now, at all events in the near future.

Each child, being divine and also individualized, if taught to unfold its latent divinity from earliest childhood would have a special message of vast importance to give to the world which he or she, and none other, could give, and which is now largely lost, but which in the future when made practical will be found of greatest benefit to mankind, and then the human race will fulfil those prophecies of old which proclaim: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord," and "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

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